



Health Promotion Evaluation Unit

# 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show: Nutrition Policy & Behaviour

School of Sport Science, Exercise and Health

**Brief Report:  
November 2010**

## Background

The availability, affordability and appeal of healthy food are important factors that can influence food related attitudes and behaviour and in turn, overweight and obesity. The prevention of overweight and obesity is a high priority for Healthway with an emphasis on promoting healthy nutrition. Healthway aims to work with sponsored groups and other partners to improve the supply and access to healthy foods, so that healthy food choices are the easiest choices (Healthway, 2007). Over the last three years, the Health Promotion Evaluation Unit has been working with Healthway and the Perth Royal Show to undertake exploratory research relating to healthy food choices at the Show.

An evaluation conducted in 2008 found that the majority of the food options available at the Show were unhealthy (Ferguson 2008). In 2009, a survey of patrons found that there was considerable support for plans to increase the number of healthy options at the Show (Ferguson et al 2010).

In response to these findings, in 2010 The Royal Agricultural Society introduced two new food vendors to operate at the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show in an effort to increase the number of healthy food options and to ensure a wide variety of foods were available to patrons. In addition, information was provided about where to find healthy foods at the Show within the '2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show lift-out' in The West Australian newspaper. The lift-out provided patrons with information about the Show and contained a two page article including map reference points of where patrons could find foods that the Show considered to be healthy.

The aim of this study was to further investigate the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of Show patrons towards healthy food choices; to assess patron knowledge and use of the two new food vendors and to assess patron knowledge and use of the healthy food options information provided in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift-out.

## Method

A 10 minute interviewer administered survey was used to intercept Western Australian adults attending the Smoke Free Perth Royal Show. The data were collected on Wednesday 29th September 2010 at a variety of places within the showgrounds. A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS for Windows (Version 17).

## Respondents

A total of 205 patrons completed the survey, a response fraction of 61%. Approximately one half of respondents were female (55%) and aged 30 to 49 years (42%). Overall, 42% of respondents reported consuming 'fast food' on one or more days in the past week, this was higher than the West Australian average (34%) (Joyce & Daly 2010).

## Key Findings

### Patron views on increasing healthy options at the Show

- The proportion of respondents that agreed with a plan to increase the number of healthy options at the Show remained high in 2010 (87%) (Figure 1).
- Whilst agreement with plans to increase the number of healthy food options was high across all age groups, a significantly higher proportion of respondents aged 30 to 49 years were in agreement (91%) compared with those aged over 50 years (81%) ( $p < 0.05$ ).
- A significantly higher proportion of respondents aged over 50 years reported they had no feelings towards the plan to increase the number of healthy options at the Show (19%) compared with younger age groups (15 to 29 years 6%, 30 to 49 years 8%) ( $p < 0.05$ ). No significant differences were observed by gender or 'past week' fast food consumption.

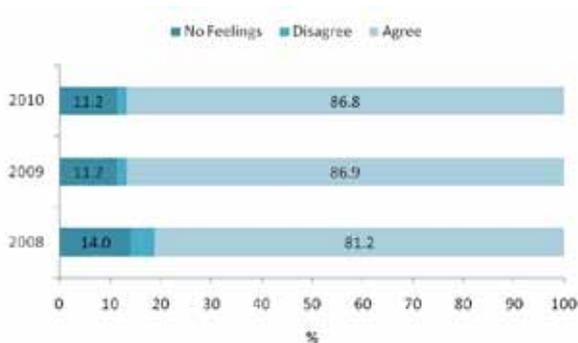


Figure 1: Agreement level towards a plan to increase the number of healthy options at the Show in 2008 (n=207), 2009 (n=206) and 2010 (n=205)

### Patrons bringing food and/or drinks to the Show

- In 2010, two fifths of respondents (40%) brought neither food nor drinks with them to the Show (Figure 2).
- In 2010, significantly more respondents (30%) reported they had brought 'only drinks' with them to the Show compared with respondents surveyed in 2009 (16%) ( $p < 0.01$ ) and significantly fewer (29%) reported they brought both food and drinks with them to the Show compared with respondents surveyed in 2009 (46%) ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Figure 2). No significant differences were observed by age, gender or 'past week' fast food consumption.

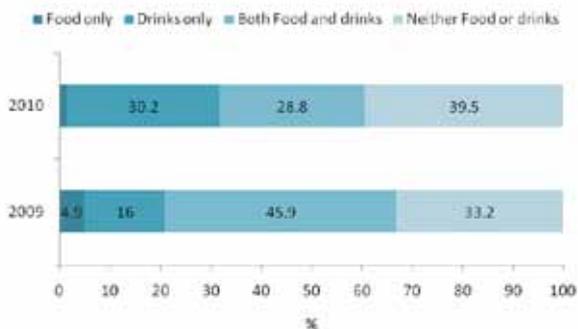


Figure 2: Proportion of food and drinks respondents brought with them to the Show in 2009 (n=206) and 2010 (n=205)

### Patrons purchasing food and/or drinks at the Show

- In 2010, a significantly higher proportion of respondents reported purchasing both food and drinks (49%) while attending the Show compared with respondents surveyed in 2009 (39%) ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Figure 3).
- Compared with respondents surveyed in 2009 (29%), significantly fewer respondents reported they hadn't purchased any food or drinks ('neither food or drinks') whilst at the Show in 2010 (17%) ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Figure 3). No significant differences were observed by age, gender or 'past week' fast food consumption.

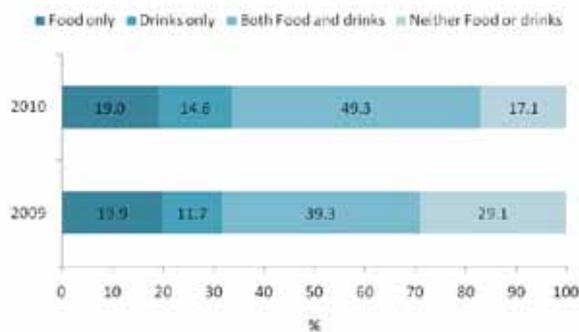


Figure 3: Proportion of food and drinks respondents purchased at the Show in 2009 (n=206) and 2010 (n=205)

- Two out of five respondents reported they had purchased hot chips whilst at the Show (41%), one quarter had purchased a burger/hotdog (26%), 15% an ice cream and 12% a sandwich/roll/wrap (Figure 4).

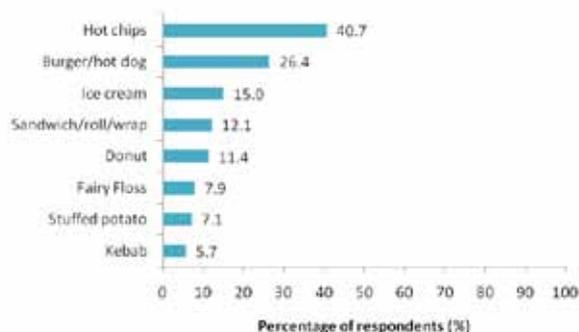


Figure 4: Foods purchased at the Show by respondents in 2010

### Patrons perceptions of the food available at the Show

- Over one half of respondents considered the food at the Show to be unhealthy overall (56%), 40% indicated they thought there was a good mix of both healthy and unhealthy options and 4% felt the food at the Show was healthy overall (Figure 5).

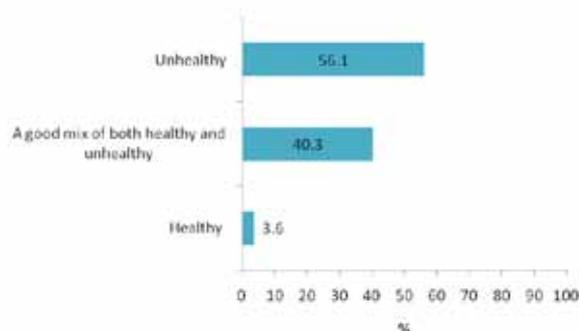


Figure 5: Overall, do you consider the foods available at the Show to be unhealthy, a good mix of healthy and unhealthy or unhealthy? (n=205)

### Patron views and attitudes towards the foods they purchase at the Show being a 'treat'

- Of those respondents who had purchased food and/or drinks (n=170), one half indicated they considered the purchase a 'treat' (49%).
- A significantly higher proportion of females considered their purchase a treat (56%) compared with males (40%) (p<0.05).
- Respondents aged 30-49 years were significantly more likely to consider their purchase a treat (63%) compared with other age groups (15 to 29 years 41%, 50+ years 38%) (p<0.01).
- Almost one half of respondents indicated they felt the statement 'Food I purchase at the show is a treat that I normally wouldn't allow myself to eat' (46%) described their feeling towards the type of food they purchase when at the Show (Figure 6).

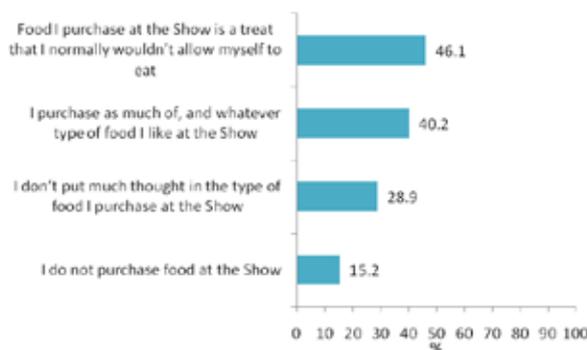


Figure 6: Selected statements that describe respondents' feelings towards the type of foods purchased at the Show (n=205)

- Females were significantly more likely to select the statement 'Food I purchase at the show is a treat that I normally wouldn't allow myself to eat' (53%) compared with males (38%) (p<0.05).
- A significantly higher proportion of males selected the statement 'I do not purchase food at the Show' (21%) compared with females (11%) (p<0.05).

### Patron knowledge and use of the New Vendors & 'Healthy Foods' information

- Most respondents reported they had not seen the two new food vendors (78%) employed by the Show to increase the number of healthy food options.
- Of those respondents who had seen the vendors, a significantly higher proportion were males (29%) compared with females (16%) (p<0.05).
- Two respondents indicated they had purchased something from one of the vendors.
- The majority of respondents indicated they had not seen the healthy food section that was in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift-out (83%) (Figure 7).

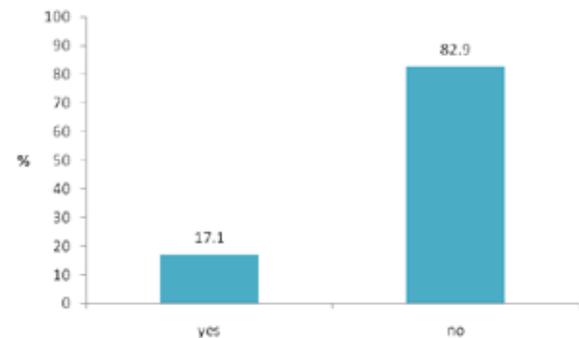


Figure 7: Proportion of patrons who had seen the healthy food section in the 'West lift-out'

- Of those respondents who had seen the healthy food section in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift out, a significantly higher proportion of respondents were aged 50+ years (27%) compared with younger age groups (15 to 29 years 12%, 30 to 49 years 12%) (p<0.05).
- Of those respondents who had seen the healthy food section in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift out, over one third (38%) indicated seeing the article had made them think about buying a healthy food choice at the Show.
- Of those respondents who had seen the healthy food section in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift out, a small proportion (15%) indicated they had actually used it to find a healthy choice at the Show.

### Conclusion

Overall, the results suggest that over one half of respondents considered the food available at the Show to be unhealthy and the large majority supported increasing the number of healthy options. In 2010, actual purchase behaviours remained predominantly unhealthy.

Approximately one half of those respondents who had purchased food and or drinks considered their purchase a 'treat', and felt that 'Food I purchase at the show is a treat that I normally wouldn't allow myself to eat'. This result suggests that almost one half of patrons consider the foods they eat whilst at the Show as foods outside of their normal diet.

The majority of respondents reported they had not seen the two new food vendors or the healthy food section that was in the 2010 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show West Australian lift-out. These results suggest that whilst the information is available, alternative strategies to communicate the information should be considered in order to reach the various target groups.

## References

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